

CHAPTER 8: HUMAN SERVICES

Human services are vital to the health of every community. Timely delivery of an array of human services is an important component of the City of Fort Worth's vision of a future with strong neighborhoods, a sound economy, and a safe community. The City, Tarrant County, the State of Texas, secular nonprofits, faith-based nonprofits and for-profit providers have a strong history of community initiatives and collaborations in the delivery of human services in Fort Worth.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Over 325 private sector and governmental agencies provide more than 2,000 human service programs for Tarrant County residents. City departments along with umbrella organizations such as United Way, Area Agency on Aging, Catholic Charities, Tarrant County Youth Collaboration and Mental Health/Mental Retardation of Tarrant County are especially important to ensure efficient delivery of services by providing information and referral, and soliciting and leveraging funds.

The City's commitment of ensuring delivery of services to all residents is evident with the creation of the Community Relations Department (CRD). CRD is the link between Fort Worth's diverse community and City services, ensuring equitable service delivery to all. The department provides information, referrals, and problem resolution for residents, builds neighborhood capacity, fosters programs that engage youth, encourages diverse dialogue, and enforces anti-discrimination laws. The CRD sponsors community events to promote tolerance and to support and celebrate diversity. CRD also provides staff support for the Human Relations Commission, the Mayor's Committee on Persons With Disabilities, the Fort Worth Commission for Women, and the Youth Advisory Board.

In 2005, the United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County completed a countywide assessment of the health and human service needs of Tarrant County communities and citizens. Community leaders identified the top ten human service concerns in Tarrant County for the next three years: public transit services, gang violence, school drop-outs, availability of quality health services, homelessness, youth substance abuse, affordable housing, quality child care, long-term care services for the elderly, and availability of quality mental health services.

The human service issues discussed in this chapter fall into the categories of children and youth, families, communities, seniors, health, and crisis relief. Many human service agencies and organizations provide services in more than one of these categories. The following list of agencies is only a sample of those providing human services in Fort Worth.

Children and Youth

Youth services are targeted toward youth at risk for behaviors such as school dropout, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, etc. Tutoring, pregnancy prevention, sports and

Volunteer Opportunities in Fort Worth



The City of Fort Worth encourages volunteers to improve our communities and help our neighbors. The Cowtown Brush Up program, shown above, is a City-initiated neighborhood revitalization program where volunteers add a fresh coat of paint to deteriorating houses. (Source: Cowtown Brush Up, 2003.)

recreation, and self esteem programs are a sample of the range of youth services available. Some agencies providing these services are Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Child Care Associates, Communities in Schools, United Community Centers, YMCA, YWCA, and the Parks and Community Services Department.

Families

Family support can include child care, programs on parenting skills, self-support training, personal and family counseling, adoption, support for neighborhood associations (please see Chapter 9: Neighborhood Capacity Building for more information) and initiatives to help build communities, immigration assistance and job training and placement. Some agencies providing these services are the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, Jewish Federation, Lena Pope Home, Northside Inter-Church Agency, The Parenting Center, The Women's Center of Tarrant County, the Fort Worth Housing Authority, Parks and Community Services Department, Tarrant County Department of Human Services, and many area churches.

Communities

The Community Relations Department (CRD) has a strong community focus. Community housing and employment rights forums, and neighborhood training workshops are examples of CRD-sponsored informational events held to inform the community of their rights and responsibilities under the City of Fort Worth's anti-discrimination ordinance. In an effort to meet the needs of the community, CRD is comprised of three divisions.

The Enforcement Division is charged with enforcing laws regarding fair housing, equal employment opportunity, and equal access in public accommodation. The CRD is a certified Fair Employment Practices Agency by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) certified Fair Housing Assistance Program. These designations ensure that complaints filed with the CRD are also filed with the federal agencies. The CRD's School and Youth Outreach Division facilitates programs, such as youth engagement and after-school programs, to encourage youth to be involved in the community. The Neighborhood and Community Outreach Division (NCO) oversees community events that celebrate diversity and encourages and assists neighborhoods with organizing neighborhood associations. The NCO division also supports existing neighborhood associations, facilitates communication between residents and City departments, provides information about City services to neighborhoods, and develops educational opportunities for neighborhood associations.

Seniors

Senior services are designed to serve those over 60 years of age and can include delivery of daily meals, transportation, social programs, guardianship services, advocacy for nursing home residents and respite care for Alzheimer's care-givers. Agencies providing these services include the American Red Cross, Area Agency on



The Bridge, a partner agency of United Way, provides emergency shelter for youth ages 10-17, individual group and family counseling, parent training, outreach and mentoring to high risk youth. More information on partner agencies can be found at the United Way website: www.unitedwaytarrant.org. (Source: United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County, 2003.)



Goodwill, another partner agency of United Way, empowers people with disabilities, disadvantages and other barriers to employment so that they can achieve maximum independence. (Source: United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County, 2003.)

Aging, Guardianship Services, Mental Health/Mental Retardation of Tarrant County, Senior Citizen Services of Greater Tarrant County, Meals on Wheels, Visiting Nurse Association of Tarrant County, and the Parks and Community Services Department.

Health

Health-related human services target people who are mentally or physically ill, have disabilities, or are caregivers. Services range from immunizations to long-term case management. Agencies providing these services include the AIDS Outreach Center, the Arc of Greater Tarrant County, Cancer Care Services, Child Study Center, Day Resource Center, Mental Health/Mental Retardation of Tarrant County, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Sickle Cell Disease of America, Tarrant Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse, AA, AlAnon, United Cerebral Palsy, Urban Inter-Tribal Center of Texas, Public Health Department and Tarrant County Public Health Department. In addition, United Way's "FitFuture" coalition strives to address the obesity epidemic; in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, nearly 66 percent of residents are considered overweight or obese. Please see Chapter 19: Public Health for more information.

Crisis Relief

A crisis can be triggered by a family emergency, health crisis, job loss, loss of a home, or natural disaster. Crisis relief can include temporary financial and material assistance including food, rent/mortgage payments, utilities, and clothing. Relief can also include job training, transportation, and shelter. Agencies that provide such services include the American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, United Community Centers, Women's Haven of Tarrant County, YWCA, various homeless shelters, the Parks and Community Services Department, the Fort Worth Housing Authority, Tarrant County Department of Human Services, and many area churches.

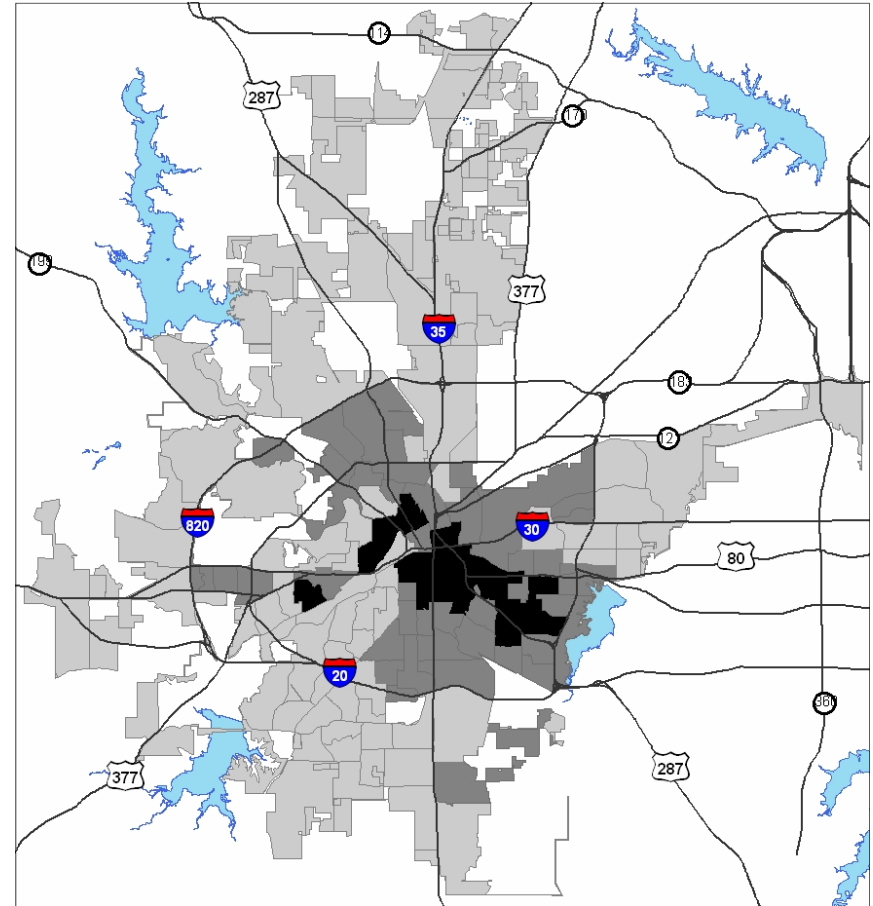
Information and Referral

Information and referral for human services is available from a variety of sources. City, county and state offices are listed in the blue pages of the Fort Worth telephone book. An additional blue page of helpful numbers lists providers organized by services. Individual service providers are also listed in the business pages of the telephone book. The United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County, in partnership with the Texas Health & Human Services Commission, operates 2-1-1 Texas, a comprehensive, nationally-accredited information and referral service. 2-1-1 Texas staff inform, guide and link people to appropriate community services locally and across Texas. They assess the caller's needs, provide guidance and follow up to determine the outcome. 2-1-1 Texas also provides information and referral for persons 60 years and older and those who care for them. 2-1-1 Texas publishes the Blue Book, a directory of Tarrant County health and human services, and Blue Book on Disk, a subscription service with more extensive listings updated quarterly. The Blue Book on Disk is also available online at no cost.

Barriers

Citizens can experience barriers in trying to access services due to a variety of reasons: lack of information, cultural differences, lack of transportation, illness,

Areas High in Poverty by Census Tract, 2000



In 2000, 15.9 percent of Fort Worth residents had incomes below the poverty level, with the greatest concentration in the central city. Poverty can present a barrier to accessing human services. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.)

disability, language disparity, and lack of income. While the need for human services spans income, age and racial lines, the needs of those below the poverty level are often most pressing. The 2000 Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Income Guidelines for the U.S. placed the poverty income level for a typical family of two adults and two children at \$17,050. The 2005 figure is \$19,350. While the poverty income level figure has increased approximately 13 percent, the minimum wage has not increased during this 5-year time period, leaving minimum wage earners farther behind the general population. Low-income heads of households and individuals can face the additional challenges of finding affordable transportation and dependent care while attending job training and during employment.

Service providers can also experience barriers to delivery of services during a weak economy when funding and donations shrink and the demand for services expands. Staffing levels, which affect delivery, are also affected by economically challenged times.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following are human service goals and objectives for the City of Fort Worth:

Promote unbiased and impartial treatment, thereby providing equitable support to all citizens of our diverse community.

- Promote fair housing through partnerships, landlord/tenant counseling, and education to housing providers as a means of furthering the public interest. The FWHA provides training and orientation for landlords on a monthly basis.
- Provide fair housing and fair employment outreach and education to other City departments, industry professionals and residents through 1) person to person dissemination of fair housing and employment information to 2,000 people annually; 2) through community outreach programs and events; and 3) by promoting these programs through mass media channels to 100,000 annually.
- Develop, coordinate, or participate in educational programs, outreach events, community meetings, and collaborations that celebrate our city's diversity, promote cooperative efforts, increase communication with the community, reduce disparities, encourage prejudice reduction, and promote tolerance.

Support the provision of quality, affordable child care and early education opportunities.

- Work with nonprofit organizations and agencies, such as Corporate Champions for Children, to provide child care that is available year-round, 24 hours a day.
- Support the provision of quality after-school programs that keep children safe, provide academic enrichment and help working families.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The following current and recommended policies and strategies will help to achieve the City's human service goals and objectives:

Southside Community Center



The Southside Community Center at 959 East Rosedale is an example of a "One-Stop" facility. This community center houses a health clinic and offers a variety of human services, including WIC, as well as providing social, cultural and recreational activities. (Source: Planning Department, 1999.)

Current Policies

- Work to improve neighborhood, community, and local government relations through the Community Relations Department.
- Work with the Fort Worth Housing Authority to provide services that enable individuals to become self-sufficient.
- Use the “Asset Building” approach to provide youth programs through City departments (see Appendix F: Youth Asset Model).
- Ensure that the citizens of the City of Fort Worth have equal enjoyment of all rights, privileges and freedoms; without regard to race, sex, religion, color, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation; and in matters related to housing and familial status.

Recommended Policies

- Provide leadership for the increase and improvement of after-school programs.
- Assist school districts and their employees’ in accessing services.
- Work with the county and the state to establish “one-stop” services in communities at locations served by public transportation.
- Establish shared facility agreements with independent school districts and other agencies for the provision of community services for seniors and children.
- Provide leadership, by convening parties to look for funding, to increase the quality of early care and educational opportunities for children age five and under.

Strategies

- Assist the Texas Health and Human Services Commission in efforts to monitor the impacts of reduced federal funding on services to low income residents.
- During City Council incentive contract negotiations, such as those related to tax abatements, incorporate the best possible employee and human services benefits (e.g. health care, livable wage, job training, child care, mass transit options, etc.) to accommodate special groups that are in need of and would not otherwise have accessibility to such benefits.
- Provide for the communication needs of special groups, such as the economically disadvantaged, non-English speakers, minorities, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.
- Coordinate local efforts to ensure children are ready to succeed in kindergarten.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

- The Community Action Partners (CAP) (formerly the Neighborhood Resources Development) Centers operated by the Parks and Community Services Department provide case management, direct services (food, shelter, clothing, utilities, transportation, childcare, and other essential needs) to persons with incomes at or below 125 percent of the poverty level. Staff also provides referrals to local agencies for additional services. The Texas Departments of Housing and Community Affairs and Housing and Urban Development fund these programs.

AMAKA Child Care Center



The AMAKA Child Care Center at 1501 Stephenson Street is located within Butler Place. It has the capacity to provide child care for 100 children.
(Source: Fort Worth Housing Authority, 2003.)

- The following seven City community centers provide community services: Andrew “Doc” Session, Como, Martin Luther King, Northside, North Tri-Ethnic, Southside, and Worth Heights. The Far Southeast and Far Northwest CAP offices, located outside the city limits, also provide community services. Many of the City’s community centers also serve as emergency shelters and safe havens for the children of the community.
- The City provides funding for after-school programs in partnership with area school districts.
- The City has initiated an effort to adopt an “Asset Building” approach to providing youth programs through City departments. The goal of this approach is to assist youth in developing assets that will help them succeed in life. These assets are grouped into eight categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identities. A list of the 40 desired developmental assets is provided in Appendix F.

Fort Worth Housing Authority

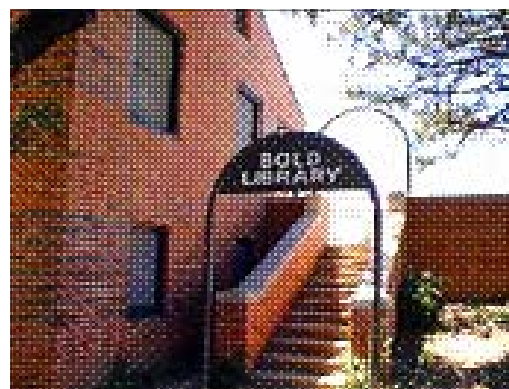
- The Family Investment Center is a one-stop center assisting public and assisted housing residents to attain self-sufficiency. Services are provided through collaborative partnerships with area service agencies. Some of the services offered or proposed include: adult and remedial education and GED preparation, case management, crisis intervention and self-empowerment skills, on-the-job training, vocational education and training activities, information and referral services, small business development and transportation services.
- The AMAKA Child Care Center provides affordable childcare on a sliding tuition scale and accommodates up to 100 children. The Center is operated in collaboration with the YMCA.
- The Family Self-Sufficiency Program, for the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) clients and public housing residents, is designed to help unemployed or underemployed residents achieve economic self-sufficiency. FWHA encourages participants to attain additional education and job training, counseling, volunteer experience, budgeting assistance and to learn healthy lifestyle behaviors. These services are provided through agencies such as Tarrant County College (TCC), Fort Worth ISD, United Way, Consumer Credit Counseling Services, Childcare Management System, etc. In addition, John Peter Smith (JPS) Hospital provides training space.
- FWHA, in collaboration with the Fort Worth Public Library, administers COOL and BOLD (satellite libraries of the Fort Worth Public Library located in the Cavile and Butler public housing communities) through which GED preparation, literacy classes, tutoring, children's story times and resource information from other libraries are offered.
- FWHA, in partnership with the Mental Health/Mental Retardation of Tarrant County, provides for a Service Coordinator to conduct comprehensive needs assessments and perform individual case management of the elderly and disabled residents of the Hunter Plaza and Fair Oaks housing communities.
- The University of North Texas Health Science Geriatric Clinic, located at Hunter

GED Attainment



The Fort Worth Housing Authority helps public and assisted housing residents with educational attainment by coordinating with TCC, FWISD, Workforce Solutions, and JPS (training site). (Source: Fort Worth Housing Authority, 2005.)

Satellite Library



The Butler community has an on-site satellite library, which opened in 1997 and is open 5 days a week. (Source: Fort Worth Housing Authority, 2003.)

- Plaza, provides geriatric health care services to residents 62 years and older.
- Senior Citizen Services provides social activities and serves lunches to elderly community residents at Cavile Place and Hunter Plaza.
- The “I Have A Dream” Foundation is an organization located in the Butler community and provides a comprehensive daily academic mentoring and tutoring program for youth in the 2nd - 5th grades.
- The Boys and Girls Club is located in the Butler and Cavile communities and provides educational, recreational, cultural and leadership programs.
- In collaboration with Tarrant County College, FWHA provides on-site computer, medical and clerical training for public housing residents and Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) clients.
- FWHA purchases monthly bus passes for public housing residents who are employed, enrolled in training/school, or actively searching for a job.

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Programs

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) furnishes temporary financial assistance to families with needy children who are deprived of parental support.
- Through Medicaid, HHSC facilitates access to Medicaid programs for recipients of TANF, the elderly, and the disabled.
- Texas Works helps people identify barriers to employment and find resources that will help them along the road to economic and social self-sufficiency.
- The Food Stamp Program helps low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to buy nutritionally adequate food to supplement their diets.
- Nutrition programs include the Child and Adult Care Food Program, National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, Special Milk Program, and the Summer Food Service Program.
- Food distribution programs provide USDA-donated commodities to low-income individuals and families, public and private schools, summer food-service programs, food banks, and soup kitchens.
- TexCare offers two separate children's health insurance programs, CHIP and Children's Medicaid. Both programs provide health insurance for children at flexible rates, based on the number of people in the family and the family's income and expenses.

Community Initiatives

- Mental Health Connection is a county-wide collaboration to improve the delivery of mental health services to those in need.
- The Partnership for Children is a collaboration focused on early childhood issues.
- Infant Mortality Initiative, headed by Catholic Charities, addresses the infant mortality rate, especially in African-American communities.
- The Early Childhood Matters Initiative is focused on ensuring every child will enter kindergarten ready to succeed.
- Planned Parenthood of North Texas, Inc. (PPNT) is dedicated to the achievement of parenthood by choice by ensuring the provision of voluntary reproductive health care and sexuality education and by advocating the right of every person



United Way

Working with 47 partner agencies and other local organizations, United Way helps seniors and kids, strengthens families, provides crisis relief and promotes health. (Source: *United Way of Metropolitan Tarrant County, 2003.*)

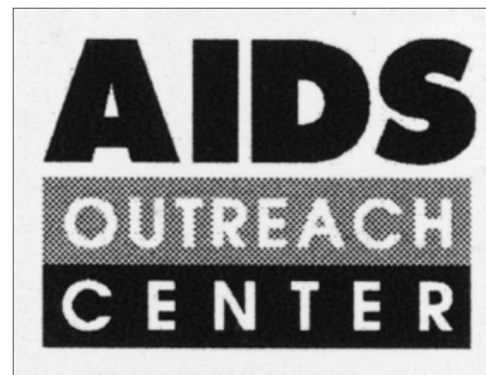
to receive these services. PPNT has 28 clinics in North Texas, including four in Fort Worth, two in Arlington, one in Bedford, and one in Burleson. PPNT provided services to 82,235 clients (80,314 women and 1,921 men) in 2004.

United Way and Partner Agencies

Nonprofit organizations and their volunteers have played an important part in addressing human service needs in Fort Worth. In 2002, United Way established five impact councils to address five key community issues. They are the Kid's Way: quality affordable childcare, the Family's Way: child abuse and neglect, the Senior Way: system of care for older adults, the Health Way: obesity, and the Crisis Relief Way: moving families from crisis to stability.

The following list of related agencies provides services to the City:

- United Way's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) of Tarrant County plans, coordinates, funds and provides human care services for older adults. The mission of the AAA is to be the visible advocate and leader in Tarrant County in providing a comprehensive continuum of services and opportunities enabling older people to lead dignified, independent, and productive lives. AAA disburses over \$2.5 million in federal and state funds annually for such services as home-delivered meals for shut-ins, transportation to medical services, and nursing home visits to prevent or resolve abuse and neglect. United Way's Area Agency on Aging also operates the Access & Assistance program which connects older adults with services that enable them to remain in their own homes as long as possible.
- Corporate Champions for Children is a Tarrant County collaboration of 17 organizations, including the City of Fort Worth, committed to providing quality care for all children. The program is coordinated through the First Texas Council of Camp Fire Boys and Girls. The program provides individual child care referrals, child care information, and parenting resource information.
- Tarrant County Child Care Management Service subsidizes child care costs and provides child care through a network of contracted providers for children of parents who are active in the workforce or preparing for employment. Child Care Associates of Fort Worth and Tarrant County operates the Service under a contract with the Tarrant County Workforce Board.
- Head Start is a national program which provides comprehensive developmental services to low-income, pre-school children, and social services to their families. Specific services for children focus on education, socio-emotional development, physical and mental health, and nutrition. The cornerstone of the program is parent and community involvement.
- The Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Fort Worth operate programs within two public housing communities and in stand-alone facilities. Tutoring, mentoring, and educational, social and recreational activities are offered.
- The YWCA sponsors teenage pregnancy prevention programs in collaboration with area schools and two public housing communities.



AIDS Outreach Center, a partner agency of United Way, works in Tarrant and surrounding counties to serve persons with HIV, educate the public about HIV prevention, and advocate for sound HIV public policy. More information on partner agencies can be found at the United Way website. (Source: AIDS Outreach Center, 2003.)